

FEB 21 1968

Original of

FOIAb3b

Do lie detectors lie-- or detect?

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

Polygraph operators claim accuracy of 95 per cent; critics call device a crude, abused invasion of privacy

By Van Gordon Sauter

Leonard H. Harrelson recently flew from Chicago to Las Vegas carrying a delicate 20-pound machine in what looked like a gray metal suitcase. He had an appointment with a 32-year-old man who was one of the suspects in the fatal shooting of a policeman outside Las Vegas.

The next day, the man took an elevator to Harrelson's room in the Mint Hotel and Casino. The sheriff's department had offered him a deal. Harrelson would give him a lie detector test. If he passed, he was in the clear. The suspect seemed confident and anxious to take the test.

THE SHERIFF'S department did not consider the man the prime suspect in the case. But after reading the records, and talking with the man, Harrelson thought he had the murderer in his room. And the man, coming face to face with the machine and its operator, seemed to lose his composure.

Harrelson sensed the change, and before starting the test, fired a quick question at the suspect: "Was the shooting premeditated?"

"It wasn't premeditated," the man quietly answered. "I had never seen the policeman before in my life."

Harrelson attached the lie detector to the subdued man and quickly ferreted out the details of the murder. The man then used Harrelson's room phone to call his wife and say he had confessed. Harrelson called the

sheriff and told him to come by and pick up the murderer.

IT WAS ANOTHER victory for Harrelson—one of the nation's leading lie detector operators—and his machine.

This type of incident has convinced law enforcement departments across the nation that the lie detector is a valuable—and valid—tool in crime detection.

It also is why the lie detector is used by a wide spectrum of organizations—ranging from big banks to the Mafia to the Central Intelligence Agency—to confirm the continuing loyalty of employees.

In fact, many firms now use the lie detector to screen prospective employees.

Examiners at John E. Reid and Associates, a Chicago-based lie detector firm, recently tested 190 applicants who had tentatively been accepted for police departments in Evanston, Skokie, Wilmette, Glencoe and

several other suburban communities. All had passed rigid pre-employment investigations.

But the examiners discovered that 57 per cent of the applicants had successfully concealed incidents of criminal activity or patterns of unacceptable social behavior. While being tested, 35 men admitted burglaries or larcenies. Thirteen said they had used narcotics. And 31 confessed to having paid bribes to police officers.

Harrelson, president of Leonarde Keeler Inc. (the Chicago-based firm founded by the man who refined the lie detector machine and test), said he once uncovered a man who wanted to join a police department so he could "kill in the line of duty" the man who had murdered his brother.

IN SPITE OF such dramatic successes, an increasing number of persons are becoming disenchanted with the lie detector procedure and its application. They argue that the machine and the operators are far from infallible.

These critics—labor union leaders and civil libertarians in the forefront, contend that the machine is being used to intrude upon a person's inherent right to privacy. They also say that in some cases the people being examined are in effect forced to test against themselves—in direct violation of the Fifth Amendment.

Ancient principle

The basic principle behind the lie detector examination—that great emotional stress accompanied by physiological change—has been known to man for centuries. In moments of fear, for instance, the flow of saliva decreases and the mouth becomes dry.

The ancient Chinese reportedly made someone who was being questioned chew rice powder and then spit it out. If the powder was dry, the suspect was presumed guilty.

IN 1895, THE Italian criminologist Cesar Lombroso charted changes in the pulse rate and blood pressure of suspected criminals undergoing questioning and claimed some success in determining guilt. A variety of machines to measure such changes were built over the years, but it was Keeler who advanced the machine and interrogation technique that established the lie detector.

Through wires and tubes, the machine measures a person's respiration, blood pressure and pulse rate. Electrodes attached to the hand measure "galvanic skin response"—the flow of electric current across the skin as sweating increases.